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Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5739th meeting

Monday, 10 September 2007, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ripert	(France)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2007/513)

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07-49942 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2007/513)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Timor-Leste, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Da Costa (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, on whom I now call.

Mr. Da Costa (Timor-Leste): I shall begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. I wish to express my gratitude to you for convening this meeting on the question of Timor-Leste. I should also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his comprehensive report (S/2007/513), as well as his Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare, for an insightful presentation of the situation in Timor-Leste.

I am deeply honoured to address the Council for the first time. As Minister for Foreign Affairs I have the privilege to speak on behalf of all the people of Timor-Leste to express our utmost gratitude for the Council's sustained commitment to the development of our young country. Looking back at our past, it is not difficult to conclude that the Timorese people bear on their shoulders a heavy burden of pain and suffering. But it is also apparent that they have always been able to overcome obstacles and difficulties in expressing and affirming their desires. The three rounds of elections just concluded were no exception.

They were the first national elections run by the Timorese, and an important assertion of our ability to exercise our independence. The national authorities and the electoral staff trained by the United Nations carried out the necessary legal, operational and logistical procedures successfully and in a highly professional manner. Overall, with the extensive support of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), the presence of international observers and the International Stabilization Force, the elections were peaceful, free, fair and transparent, as well as a demonstration of the people's hope, confidence and enthusiasm.

The first round of presidential elections was held on 9 April, with a field of 8 candidates; the run-off was held a month later, on 9 May. As a result of those elections, former Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta was sworn in as the new President, on 20 May, succeeding Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. The legislative election held on 30 June was the culmination of the long process begun with the presidential elections. The election was a true test of the constitution of Timor-Leste and the political and democratic maturity of the Timorese. In electing their representatives to the National Parliament, the citizens clearly expressed their desire for political dialogue and plurality, together with stability and national development.

The new 65-seat Parliament was inaugurated on 30 July, with 7 of 14 parties and coalitions gaining seats. The President of the Parliament was elected on the same day, while the two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and two Deputy Secretaries were elected the following day. I am pleased to say that we have 18 seats occupied by women, which is the largest percentage in our legislature's short history. On 6 August, President Ramos-Horta invited Mr. Gusmão, President of the Congresso Nacional de Reconstrução

de Timor-Leste, nominated by the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority, a post-electoral coalition of four parties, to be the new Prime Minister and to form a Government. On 8 August, Prime Minister Gusmão was sworn in, together with 10 Ministers, 2 of whom are women who head the key justice and finance portfolios, and 14 Vice-Ministers and Secretaries of State. On 30 August, a further 12 members of Government were appointed, bringing the total number of women in the cabinet to 5. There are still three outstanding positions of Secretary of State to be appointed.

Throughout the electoral process, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Atul Khare, and his UNMIT team provided invaluable support to us, urging constitutional as well as politically acceptable solutions. The Timorese did their part, but without the substantial contribution of the international community, including that of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), such positive results would have not been achieved.

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste, I would like to extend our most sincere appreciation to the United Nations and to our bilateral partners for their support throughout the process. I would like to acknowledge the support of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal. Those countries responded without hesitation to our appeals, first during the crisis; since then, they have maintained a continuous presence on our national territory to guarantee public order.

The Government of Timor-Leste takes into serious consideration the recommendations of the Independent Electoral Certification Team. We are aware that the benchmarks underpinning the certification exercise were, in some cases, only partially met. We are committed to addressing our shortcomings in those areas in order to improve the conduct of future elections, including by taking measures to guarantee the independence of the electoral authorities and the consolidation of the legal framework.

We profoundly regret the loss of two lives during the electoral period and the serious damage to private and public property that occurred immediately after. These tragic episodes remind us that our emerging democracy needs sustained assistance in order to consolidate itself. Although I believe that there has been a qualitative change since April 2006, the road ahead is still long and challenging. For that reason, the Government of Timor-Leste fully accepts and supports the recommendations put forward in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/513) before the Council today.

Through their vote, the people of Timor-Leste sent a clear message to their leaders that peaceful dialogue and inclusive politics should prevail. They are committed to becoming a truly tolerant and pluralistic society based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. The leaders of Timor-Leste will facilitate that process by strengthening the democratic institutional framework and ensuring that the fruits of economic development equally benefit all citizens. All political parties — those that now form the Government and those that do not, those that sit in the new Parliament and those that do not — have pledged to adhere to the fundamental principles of good governance and to support a meaningful role for the opposition after the election. They showed their commitment by signing the political party accord in May of this year. Yet, to achieve those goals and to keep our word, we must overcome numerous challenges in the short, medium and long term. The support of the United Nations will be essential at each step of this tortuous road.

Fragile institutional structure is the major challenge facing Timor-Leste. Coupled with limited capacity and lack of skills and training, it undermines the building of a culture of peaceful settlement of conflicts. Justice is crucial also for building respect for the rule of law, which is undermined by a widespread perception of a lack of accountability. In this context, it is essential to solve the petitioners issue and clearly define the roles and functions of the National Police Force and Armed Forces of Timor-Leste while ensuring adequate civilian oversight mechanisms. Outstanding socio-economic problems include poverty, unemployment, violence against women and humanitarian issues, such as the return of internally displaced persons.

I believe Timor-Leste is at a crucial moment and should seize the opportunity to build on its recent security and democratic gains. In his inauguration speech, Prime Minister Gusmão set the short-term priorities of the Government and named consolidating

security as the first of these. Consolidating security will include solving the petitioners issue and the case of Alfredo Reinado and promoting dialogue with the Armed Forces of Timor-Leste. A stable security environment, which is a major pillar of the mandate of UNMIT, would serve as a foundation for all further developments. For this reason, interim law enforcement continues to be the priority of the United Nations police. Maintaining the current contingent at its current strength until the expiration of the present mandate is essential. Only a stabilized security situation would allow the subsequent transition from executive policing to the monitoring phase, depending on progress achieved in the screening and certification processes of the National Police Force.

The coalition of parties that form the fourth constitutional Government is internally solid and committed to an open and consultative approach within the Cabinet, but also and especially with all other parties. As an indication of that conciliatory attitude, Prime Minister Gusmão offered Cabinet positions to the former ruling party.

The post-electoral period, however, showed that our nascent democratic mentality is still in need of substantial guidance. Consolidating a culture of justice in which citizens' rights are respected and disputes are fairly settled through legal channels is the building block of a free, open and democratic society. Revamped support by UNMIT would be vital to building the necessary capacity in the justice sector.

The provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons will remain an issue for some time in Timor-Leste. As much as we would wish for a short-term solution to this situation, there is none, and addressing the root causes of the crisis requires a medium- to long-term effort. Continuous efforts to guarantee security, resolve land rights issues and strengthen the judiciary and national- and community-level dialogue initiatives to re-establish national unity must be undertaken. Those are the preconditions for the full reintegration of internally displaced persons and for enabling them to reclaim their lives and livelihoods. In addition to the challenges related to the return and reintegration of the approximately 100,000 persons who remain displaced from and within Dili since last year, we are now faced with a new humanitarian situation in the Viqueque and Baucau districts, where 323 houses were burned and around 6,000 citizens were affected last month.

I would like to personally thank all Member States which have so generously assisted our young nation in addressing its humanitarian crisis. Although we continue to rely on the assistance of our partners at this critical juncture, the Government of Timor-Leste remains primarily responsible for delivering assistance and protection to our people. In the recent past, we have been fortunate to have received financial support through the consolidated appeals process. In the medium term, the Government of Timor-Leste aims at being able to bear more of the financial burden of responding to humanitarian emergency needs and to enhance the level of preparedness and contingency planning for future disasters. Timor-Leste appreciates the support of the Central Emergency Response Fund, which provided funds quickly and predictably during the crisis.

As members can see, Timor-Leste is faced with all sorts of formidable challenges. The international community has so far been at our side. We shall not forget, however, what we learned from the United Nations Transitional Administration East Timor: that consolidation of the State's institutional framework is a long and difficult process. On behalf of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, therefore, I shall ask Council members to give consideration to the possibility of extending UNMIT's mandate until 2012. I understand that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General also foresees the need for international support for at least two and half years after the end of the present mandate, and I do agree with him that a mission with a peacebuilding mandate should subsequently be created and stay in place for five additional years. I think, however, that a peacekeeping mission would need to be in place longer than 2010. In expressing Timor-Leste's gratitude for the numerous signs of continued engagement by the international community, let me assure the Council that we are strongly committed to putting its trust and investment to good use.

On 13 September, the new Government will present its programme to the National Parliament. It has committed itself to strengthening the institutional framework, including the integrity and professionalism of the civil service, the fight against corruption, and investment in the security sector; to fighting impunity by creating a functional, credible, independent and impartial judicial system; to reforming the security sector by revising the existing policies and promoting

dialogue among all national institutions to develop highly professional forces that could participate in international missions; to continuing the good work done by previous Governments in the health sector, with a view to ensuring universal access; and to supporting the professionalism and independence of the media, while facilitating access for the entire population and dedicating special attention to the needs of youth and women to enable them to participate fully and meaningfully in all aspects of Timor-Leste's development.

Security Council resolution 1704 (2006) mandated UNMIT to

> "promote a 'compact' between Timor-Leste and the international community for coordinating Government, United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral contributors to priority programmes" (*para. 4 (f)*).

In that regard, the Government of Timor-Leste has prepared a 24-month recovery programme to address the priorities emerging from the crisis. The compact's implementation has begun with the formation of the new Government of Timor-Leste. Also, the Government of Timor-Leste has made contributions to key priorities emerging from the crisis and hopes that the development partners will enhance support towards those key areas.

The new Government is strongly committed to the economic advancement of Timor-Leste and acknowledges the remarkable job of its predecessors in building from scratch the foundations of national development. To consolidate those achievements, it will pay considerable attention to the private sector and will encourage the opening of the country to foreign investment. In that context, Timor-Leste is keen also to deepen its economic and commercial ties with the countries of the region. Advancing the negotiations for accession to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is one of the first priorities of the new Government.

Timor-Leste is poised to participate meaningfully in the family of nations. We pledge to put into practice the universal principles of human rights to which we adhere and which are enshrined in the international covenants that we have ratified. We are committed to participating in the best possible way in the United Nations to foster the democratic values of dialogue, tolerance and peace. We are determined to reinforce our ties of friendship with the countries that are both geographically and historically close to us, including Australia, Indonesia and Portugal.

In particular, Timor-Leste and Indonesia are seeking to deal with their past while deepening their friendship. Although I am aware that some in this room will not agree with me, the Government of Timor-Leste believes that the best mechanism available to deal with our shared past is the bilateral Commission of Truth and Friendship. We understand the reservations of the United Nations, but we encourage Council members to reflect on the fact that countries in transition to democracy, as both Indonesia and Timor-Leste are, must be prudent and sensitive when looking at their own realities.

I shall conclude by stressing that the Government of Timor-Leste fully accepts and strongly supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report, including in particular those pertaining to the continued engagement of the formed police units and United Nations police contingents until February 2008.

I am grateful for this opportunity to address you, Sir, and the members of the Security Council. I also wish to extend to the members of the Council an invitation to visit Timor-Leste so that the new Government can better benefit from its advice.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject at hand.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.